

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A nicked cutting rule, comprising:
 - a shank portion having two substantially parallel shank side surfaces extending in a direction of length of the rule separated by a thickness of the shank portion;
 - a V-shaped cutting edge portion defined by two cutting edge portion surfaces that intersect at ends remote from the shank portion to define a cutting edge, the cutting edge portion having portions separated in the direction of length of the rule by a plurality of notches extending inwardly from the cutting edge toward the shank portion;
 - an intermediate portion between and integral with the shank portion and the cutting edge portion, the intermediate portion being thinner than the thickness of the shank portion and including two intermediate portion surfaces extending between the two shank side surfaces and the two cutting edge portion surfaces;
 - wherein the thickness of the shank portion is from about 0.178 to 2.13 mm, the shank portion has a hardness between about 280 and 450 HV, and the cutting edge portion has a hardness between about 480 to 720 HV, and
 - wherein at least one of the two cutting edge portion surfaces and the two intermediate portion surfaces are shaved.

2. (Original) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein the shank portion has a thickness of about 0.71 mm and a hardness about 380 HV, the cutting edge portion has a hardness about 640 HV and the nicked cutting rule is bendable to 150° at a radius of 0.35 mm.

3. (Currently Amended) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein the shank portion has a thickness of from about 0.178 to about 0.710 mm.

4. (Currently Amended) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein the shank portion has a thickness of from about 1.05 mm.

5. (Currently Amended) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein the shank portion has a thickness of from about 1.42 to about 2.13 mm.

6. (Original) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein at least one of the cutting edge portion and the intermediate portion have shaved surfaces.

7. (Original) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein the cutting edge portion has ground surfaces.

8. (Original) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein distances between at least two pairs of succeeding notches are different.

9. (Original) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 1, wherein the shank portion has a lower hardness at a surface of the shank portion than at a center of the shank portion.

10. (Currently Amended) A nicked cutting rule, comprising:

- a shank portion having two substantially parallel shank side surfaces extending in a direction of length of the rule separated by a thickness of the shank portion;
- a V-shaped cutting edge portion defined by two cutting edge portion surfaces that intersect at ends remote from the shank portion to define a cutting edge, the cutting edge portion having portions separated in the direction of length of the rule by a plurality of notches extending inwardly from the cutting edge toward the shank portion;
- an intermediate portion between and integral with the shank portion and the cutting edge portion, the intermediate portion being thinner than the thickness of the shank portion and including two intermediate portion surfaces extending between the two shank side surfaces and the two cutting edge portion surfaces;

wherein a hardness of the shank portion, a hardness of the cutting edge portion, the thickness of the shank portion, and the thicknesses of the intermediate portion and the cutting edge portion are selected such that the nicked cutting rule is bendable to 150° at a radius of 0.35 mm, and

wherein at least one of the two cutting edge portion surfaces and the two intermediate portion surfaces are shaved.

Claims 11-30 (Canceled)

31. (New) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 10, wherein the shank portion has a thickness of from about 0.178 to about 0.710 mm.

32. (New) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 10, wherein the shank portion has a thickness of from about 1.05 mm.

33. (New) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 10, wherein the shank portion has a thickness of from about 1.42 to about 2.13 mm.

34. (New) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 10, wherein at least one of the cutting edge portion and the intermediate portion have shaved surfaces.

35. (New) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 10, wherein the cutting edge portion has ground surfaces.

36. (New) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 10, wherein distances between at least two pairs of succeeding notches are different.

37. (New) The nicked cutting rule as set forth in claim 10, wherein the shank portion has a lower hardness at a surface of the shank portion than at a center of the shank portion.